

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 27, 2003

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States of America
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In October, you requested and received our support for H.J. Res. 114, which authorizes the conditional use of the United States Armed Forces to disarm Saddam Hussein. We voted for this authorization because we share the deep concern that Saddam Hussein may be developing or in possession of weapons of mass destruction, and that this poses a direct and imminent threat to the United States.

We also agreed that Congressional support was essential to our efforts to persuade the United Nations Security Council to take necessary steps to verify Iraq's compliance with its agreement to disarm. The unanimous passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441 on November 8, 2002, and the subsequent return of inspectors to Iraq has been an important victory for your administration and for the effort to disarm Iraq.

While we share your skepticism about Iraq's timely and total compliance with UN disarmament requirements, we believe that we should allow the UN inspectors additional time to complete their mission.

In essence, the presence of more than 250 weapons inspectors from 60 countries throughout Iraq contravenes the initial fear that the danger from Saddam Hussein is direct and imminent. While questions have been raised regarding Iraq's duty to accurately account for proscribed materials, we insist that the lives of American servicemen and women should not be sacrificed as a response to discrepancies in Iraq's reporting obligations. Nor do we believe that our current frustration over the pace of inspections should trigger military action.

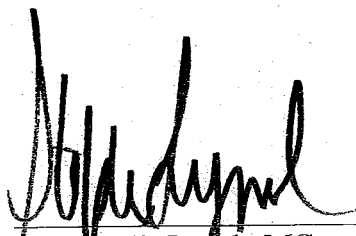
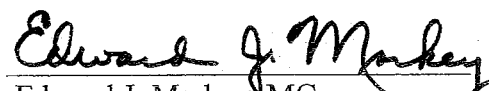
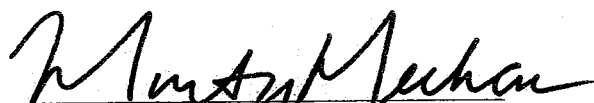
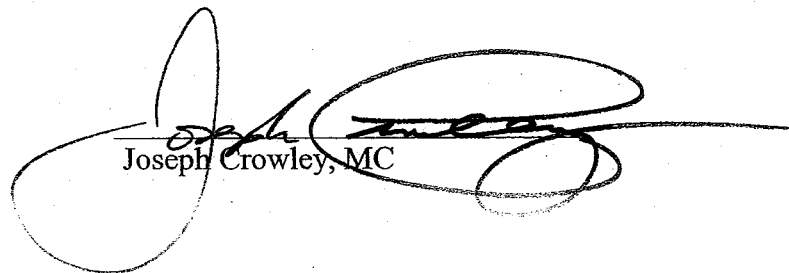
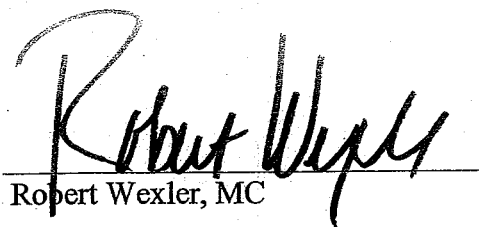
As you have acknowledged, America's long-term national security interests depend in part on the support and cooperation of the international community. We believe, similarly, that a broad-based international coalition is important to ensure that Iraq and other would-be proliferators are denied access to weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. President, your leadership and commitment to working within the United Nations Security Council has brought us all to a point where these inspections are moving forward. You deserve much credit for these developments. However, a renewed commitment from your administration to exhaust all diplomatic means, including conducting complete and unrestricted inspections to peacefully disarm Iraq, is also necessary to preserve the international consensus to enforce the rule of law against Saddam Hussein.

Again, Mr. President, each member who has signed below has thus far supported you in this effort. Obviously, we are available to meet with you at your request.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


Stephen F. Lynch, MC
Edward J. Markey, MC
Martin T. Meehan, MC
Joseph Crowley, MC
Robert Wexler, MC